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Letter dated 6 September 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 6 September 2001, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Şafak **Göktürk**
First Counsellor
Deputy Permanent Representative
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Annex to the letter dated 6 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I would like to refer to the letter dated 8 August 2001 (A/55/1026-S/2001/778) addressed to you by a Greek Cypriot delegate at the United Nations in connection with archaeological excavations in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and to bring to your kind attention the following information.

The excavations carried out at the archaeological site of Salamis, which is situated within the sovereign territory of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, are carried out with the consent of the Turkish Cypriot authorities and, contrary to the Greek Cypriot allegations, are perfectly legal. These allegations stem from the false claim that the sovereignty of the Greek Cypriot administration extends over the whole island, including the territory of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. This claim does not correspond with the reality in Cyprus, namely the existence of two independent States, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within their respective territories on the island.

It is ironic that the Greek Cypriot side perceives the efforts by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to bring to light any hidden archaeological artefacts and remains and to preserve them as having "an adverse and destructive effect on the cultural heritage of the island". This odd perception, in fact, is not surprising in view of the fact that the Greek Cypriot administration, hiding behind its false title as the "government of Cyprus", still refuses to accept the realities on the island and the right to statehood of the Turkish Cypriot people. The fact remains that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus does not need the approval of the Greek Cypriot administration to carry out archaeological excavations on its own territory.

Despite the systematic blocking of the flow of any external financial or technical assistance to Northern Cyprus for conservation purposes by the Greek Cypriot side, the authorities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus continue to work diligently to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of Northern Cyprus regardless of its origin. The archaeological excavations carried out at the site of Salamis are part of this effort to protect and to preserve the cultural heritage in our country for future generations.

It is noteworthy in this context that the Department of Antiquities and Museums of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus invited the French archaeological team of the University of Lyon to return to Salamis to continue the work they had conducted, at the request of the Greek Cypriot administration, until 1974. However, all the invitations remained unanswered. Other archaeologists who wished to collaborate with the Department of Antiquities and Museums out of purely professional interests also had to turn down invitations because of the Greek-Greek Cypriot political pressure and blackmail.

Under the prevailing circumstances, the Department of Antiquities and Museums of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus revived the project in 1998 under the provisions of the Antiquities Law of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and in accordance with relevant international principles and norms, in cooperation with the Research Centre for Archaeological and Cultural Heritage of the Eastern Mediterranean University in Gazi Mağusa, the Turkish Republic of

Northern Cyprus, and the Ankara and Middle East Technical Universities in Turkey. During the excavation works, carried out by a group of archaeologists headed by Professor Coşkun Özgünel of Ankara University, numerous artefacts belonging to the late Roman period have been excavated from the site, which dates back to 1100 B.C., and all findings are being preserved in line with internationally set standards. During the process, a number of important historical structures have been exposed, such as the eastern front of the Roman Agora and the Roman Baths, which were destroyed in the aftermath of an earthquake.

The Greek Cypriot administration, which attempts to present itself as the champion of conservation of cultural heritage, has, since 1963, been trying to eradicate all traces of the Turkish-Muslim heritage of Cyprus. During the period from 1963 to 1974, mosques, shrines and other holy sites in Turkish villages all around the island were destroyed by the Greek Cypriots. Today the remaining Ottoman Turkish shrines in South Cyprus have been targets of repeated arson attacks. For instance, on 3 December 2000, there was an arson attack on the Ömeriye Mosque, a significant Muslim shrine located in South Cyprus. Furthermore, owing to the Greek Cypriot administration's deliberate policy of total neglect, the Turkish-Muslim heritage in South Cyprus is under threat of disintegration. This utter disrespect for the Turkish-Islamic heritage has also been confirmed by independent sources, including Mr. Ymenus van der Werff, General Rapporteur of the Subcommittee on the Architectural and Artistic Heritage of the Committee of Culture and Education of the Council of Europe, who reported the following in his report published as a document of the Council of Europe on 2 July 1989 (AS/CULT/AA (41) (1), para. 5.3):

> "We noted with regret the complete destruction of the main mosque in Paphos. The whole area has since been flattened to give way for a widened road junction and a car park. There is no memorial to the existence of the mosque. Below the road a Turkish bath complex remains hidden in the rubble and vegetation awaiting restoration. The Turkish Cypriot cemetery by the nearby St. Sophia Mouttalos Mosque is dilapidated".

The Greek Cypriot delegate has also referred in his letter to the recent judgement of the European Court of Human Rights on the fourth application of the Greek Cypriot administration in an attempt to attribute responsibility to Turkey for the actions of the Government of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In previous letters addressed to you, the Turkish Cypriot side has expounded its position with regard to the above judgement. I will therefore confine myself to reiterating that decisions that turn a blind eye to the illegal and illegitimate status of the Greek Cypriot administration while treating the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as non-existent cannot change the fact that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a sovereign and independent State and that its Government is the only legitimate authority exercising jurisdiction in Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, attributing responsibility to Turkey, which has no jurisdiction in Northern Cyprus, and referring to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as Turkey's "subordinate local administration" can only make the Greek Cypriot administration more intransigent thus rendering your mission of good offices even more difficult to pursue.

With regard to the references by the Greek Cypriot delegate to "the occupied part of Cyprus" and "the Turkish invasion of 1974", I would like to reiterate that

Turkey intervened in Cyprus following the Greek coup d'état of 15 July 1974 to put an end to the invasion and occupation of the island by Greece. The Turkish intervention was carried out in accordance with Turkey's rights and obligations under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee. Today Turkey, in accordance with the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee and with the content of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, remains to be the only deterrent against the aggression of the Greek Cypriot administration, which has been illegally occupying the seat of the 1960 partnership Republic of Cyprus since 1963.

Needless to say, the Greek Cypriot insistence on making baseless allegations against the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Turkey, particularly at this sensitive stage, does not facilitate your good offices mission. Reconciliation in the island can be greatly facilitated if the Greek Cypriot side were to accept the reality that it is not the "government" of the whole of Cyprus and that it cannot interfere in the internal affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. We trust that you will urge the Greek Cypriot administration to cease all such activities that would impede your efforts towards facilitating a process of reconciliation in the island.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Aytuğ **Plümer**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus